

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L WARSAW 1521

PASS AGRICULTURE/FAS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAGR

SUBJECT: POLAND-GRAIN-HANDLING FACILITIES (CER 59545)

REF: STATE 005380

1. THE FOLLOWING REPORT IS BASED UPON PERSONAL OBSERVATION AND CONVERSATIONS WITH POLISH OFFICIALS DURING TWO RECENT VISITS TO THE PORT OF GDYNIA BY THE AGRICULTURAL ATTACHE IN CONNECTION WITH THE USDA INVESTIGATION OF THE U.S.-ORIGIN CARGO OF CORN ABOARD THE POLISH VESSEL RYSY II.

2. THE GRAIN-STORAGE CAPACITY AT SZCZECIN IS REPORTEDLY 5,000 M.T. AND DRAFT AT THE ELEVATOR IS 28 FEET. STORAGE CAPACITY AT GDYNIA AND GDANSK IS 10,000 TONS AT EACH LOCATION. THE RYSY II WAS CARRYING 83,000 M.T. OF CORN AND DRAWING 36 FEET (APPARENTLY SITTING IN THE SILT) AT PIER SIDE, AND MOVED TO THE ELEVATOR AFTER DISCHARGING APPROX. 22,000 M.T. HER TONNAGE IS SAID TO BE 135,000 DWT.

3. WE WERE INFORMED THAT ALL THREE PORTS WERE CURRENTLY WORKING AT CAPACITY AND DISCHARGING A TOTAL OF 20,000 M.T. OF GRAIN PER 24-HOUR DAY. ELEVATOR-DISCHARGING CAPACITY AT GDANSK IS REPORTED TO BE 3,000 M.T. PER DAY, AND 4,000 M.T. PER DAY AT GDYNIA. BY
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EXTENSION, DISCHARGING CAPACITY AT SZCZECIN COULD BE SOME-

WHERE AROUND 10,000 M.T. PER DAY--ESTIMATING 2-T-3,000 TONS
A DAY TOTAL LIGHTERING AT ALL LOCATIONS.

4. THE RYSY II WAS NOT DISCHARGED AT SZCZECIN REPORTEDLY
BECAUSE VESSELS LONGER THAN 220 METERS CANNOT BE ACCOMMODATED
AT THE ELEVATOR THERE.

5. GRAIN IS DISCHARGED AT GDYNIA BOTH WITH VACUVATORS AND BUCKET
CRANES. INITIALLY THE RYSY II WAS DISCHARGED INTO SMALL RUSSIAN
COASTAL FREIGHTERS, A FLEET OF WHICH HAS BEEN SPECIALLY
CHARTERED BY THE GOP FOR THE CURRENT FLUX OF GRAIN IMPORTS.
UPON REACHING SATISFACTORY DRAFT, SHE WAS MOVED AND BEGAN
DISCHARGING AT THE ELEVATOR WHILE CONTINUING TO LIGHTER. NO DIRECT
DISCHARGING INTO RAIL CARS WAS OBSERVED.

6. GRAIN WAS DISCHARGED BY THE ELEVATOR INTO TOP-OPENING BOX-
CARS. NO GRAIN-HOPPER CARS WERE OBSERVED DURING THE TWO VISITS.
THERE ARE DEFINITELY SHORTAGES IN ROLLING STOCK CAPABLE OF TRANS-
PORTING GRAIN, BUT THE MAGNITUDE IS UNKNOWN. IT WAS REPORTED
BY OTHER OBSERVERS THAT EXISTING STOCK WAS BEING FULLY
UTILIZED. NO INFORMATION WAS OBTAINED ON THE USE OF UNIT TRAINS
OR ON GENERAL PROBLEMS OF THE INTERNAL TRANSPORT SYSTEM.

7. THE RYSY II WAS NOT FUMIGATED. NO INFORMATION WAS OBTAINED
ON FUMIGATION PRACTICES.

8. DURING THE SECOND WEEK OF FEBRUARY, THERE WERE REPORTEDLY 70
SHIPS WAITING TO DISCHARGE AT SZCZECIN, GDYNIA, AND GDANSK-
SAID TO BE SUFFICIENT TOTALLY TO EMPLOY THE PORTS'
FACILITIES UNTIL THE END OF MARCH, 1976. ON MARCH 3, A CLEAR,
WINDY DAY, FROM THE GDANSK-WESTERPLATTE 28 SHIPS WERE OBSERVED
WAITING IN THE ROADS OFF GDYNIA, BOWS TOWARD THAT PORT.

9. THE AGATT WAS TOLD TWO STORIES BY DIFFERENT POLISH OFFICIALS
ABOUT FUTURE PLANS FOR PORT GRAIN-HANDLING FACILITIES. THE
FIRST WAS THAT AN ELEVATOR WITH A STORAGE CAPACITY OF 300,000
M.T. WILL BE CONSTRUCTED AT THE NEW PORT IN GDANSK, WHILE THE
NEW ELEVATOR PLANNED FOR GDYNIA WILL HOLD 100,000 M.T.

10. ANOTHER VERSION HOLDS THAT THERE ARE CURRENTLY NO PLANS FOR
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CONSTRUCTION OF AN ELEVATOR AT GDANSK, BUT THAT THE ELEVATOR
PLANNED FOR GDYNIA WILL HAVE A CAPACITY OF 200,000 M.T. AND
THAT GDYNIA WILL BE THE MAIN GRAIN-HANDLING PORT FOR POLAND.

11. THE SECOND VERSION APPEARS TO BE THE MORE CREDIBLE IN LIGHT
OF EARLIER CONVERSATIONS WITH OTHER OFFICIALS WHO HAVE STATED
THAT, IN VIEW OF THE DRIVE TO INCREASE DOMESTIC GRAIN PRODUCTION
AND TO REDUCE IMPORTS, POLAND DOES NOT PLAN A MAJOR PROGRAM OF

CONSTRUCTION OF PORT GRAIN-HANDLING FACILITIES, BUT WILL BUILD A MODERN NEW ELEVATOR EMPLOYING THE LATEST AMERICAN AND EUROPEAN TECHNOLOGY TO HANDLE THOSE GRAINS AND FEEDSTUFFS WHICH MUST CONTINUE TO BE IMPORTED.

12. GENERAL COMMENTS: (A) NO MENTION WAS EVER MADE TO THE OBSERVER OF THE PORT OF KOLOBRZEG IN TERMS OF TRAIN OR OTHERWISE; (B) THERE WERE NO RUMORS OR HINTS OF ANY DIVERSION OF POLISH SHIPS TO SOVIET PORTS; (C) DESPITE THE CURRENT PRESS OF SHIPS WAITING TO DISCHARGE AT GDYNIA AND THE DEMURRAGE WHICH MUST BE ACCRUING AGAINST THE GOP, SUPERVISION AND DISCIPLINE OF LONG-SHOREMEN APPEARED ALMOST NON-EXISTENT. THERE WAS SLEEPING ON THE JOB, ESPECIALLY ON THE NIGHT SHIFT (SOMETIMES RIGHT IN THE GANKS AND REPORTEDLY ALSO IN CREWS' QUARTERS). OTHER PROLONGED ABSENCES, FAILURE TO TEND TO VACUATORS, FAILURE TO SHOVEL GRAIN DOWN INTO THE CONE, AND JUST GENERAL SITTING AROUND WERE COMMON; (D) LONG-SHOREMEN WERE NOT EQUIPPED WITH DUST MASKS, RESPIRATORS, GOGGLES, OR EAR PLUGS WHICH MAY CONTRIBUTE TO THEIR NOTABLE LACK OF ENTHUSIASM FOR THE JOB; (E) IT WAS REPORTED THAT THE LIGHTERAGE OF GRAIN IS COSTING THE GOP \$4.30 PER TON, THAT UNDER CURRENT MARKET CONDITIONS THE FREIGHT TO POLISH PORTS IS \$7.50 PER TON, AS OPPOSED TO \$3.50-\$4.00 TO NORTH-SEA PORTS, AND THAT, WITH PROPER DISCHARGING FACILITIES, THE FREIGHT DIFFERENTIAL BETWEEN POLISH

AND NORTH-SEA PORTS WOULD HAVE BEEN \$1.00 INSTEAD OF \$4.00. THUS IT WAS REMARKED, PAST SHORTSIGHTEDNESS ON BEHALF OF PLANNERS IN NOT CONSTRUCTING NEW GRAIN-HANDLING FACILITIES 15 YEARS AGO IS NOW COSTING GOP MANY TIMES WHAT THE NEW FACILITY WOULD HAVE COST. WITH REGARD TO FREIGHT RATES, IT WAS MENTIONED THAT THE BREAK-EVEN RATE FOR POLISH VESSELS IS \$9.00 PER TON.
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